

An original
play about the
Lakota chief
who united
his people
in a struggle
for survival.

Sitting Bull
was a powerful
leader and
medicine man.

Sitting Bull

**A Native
American
Legend**

>>> Fluency Workout >>>

Tackling difficult proper nouns

Proper nouns are specific people, places, things, or ideas. These words begin with capital letters and may be names and locations that are unfamiliar to you. Try these tips to improve your fluency:

- In textbooks, use the glossary to look up pronunciation.
- In short stories, check the bottom of the page to see if the word is listed.
- Break the words into syllables.

Try these words from the play:

La•ko•ta Hunk•esh•nee Wi•chas•ha Wa•si•chu

Introduction

Three hundred years ago, America's western border ended at the Mississippi River. The land from the Mississippi to the Pacific Ocean was ruled by Native Americans. The Lakota Sioux was one of the most powerful Indian nations in North America. They lived and hunted buffalo in a large territory across the Northern Great Plains.

As white settlers entered Lakota lands during the mid-1800's, fierce fighting took place. In 1868, a powerful warrior named Sitting Bull became the chief of the united Lakota nation.

Scene 1

Narrator 1: The time is 1835.

The place is a Native American village in the Great Plains.

Narrator 2: A young boy sits silently in the corner of his family's tepee. His arms are folded and he is frowning.

Narrator 1: The boy's father, a powerful Lakota chief, enters the tepee and looks down at his son. He walks over to his wife who is cooking buffalo meat over a fire.

Father: What is wrong with the boy?

Mother: He won't eat.

Narrator 2: The chief walks over to his son.

Father: Why won't you eat, son?

Boy: I hate my name. I want a different one.

Father: All in good time. You must earn your name.

Boy (angrily): I want a new name now!

Father (sternly): Fine. I will call you *Hunkesh-nee*. It means "slow."

Narrator 1: The boy gets this name because he never does anything quickly. He goes to bed without dinner.

Narrator 2: As Slow grows into a teenager, he is determined to find a way to earn himself a new name.

Narrator 1: He always tries to do his best so that one day he can become a good warrior.

Narrator 2: Over time, Slow

Characters

Sign up for the character you're going to read.

*Starred characters are major roles.

*Narrator 1

*Narrator 2

Father, Sitting Bull's father

Mother, Sitting Bull's mother

Boy, Young Sitting Bull

*Sitting Bull, A Powerful Lakota Leader

Light Hair, Sitting Bull's first wife

George Custer, Lt. Colonel of United States 7th Cavalry

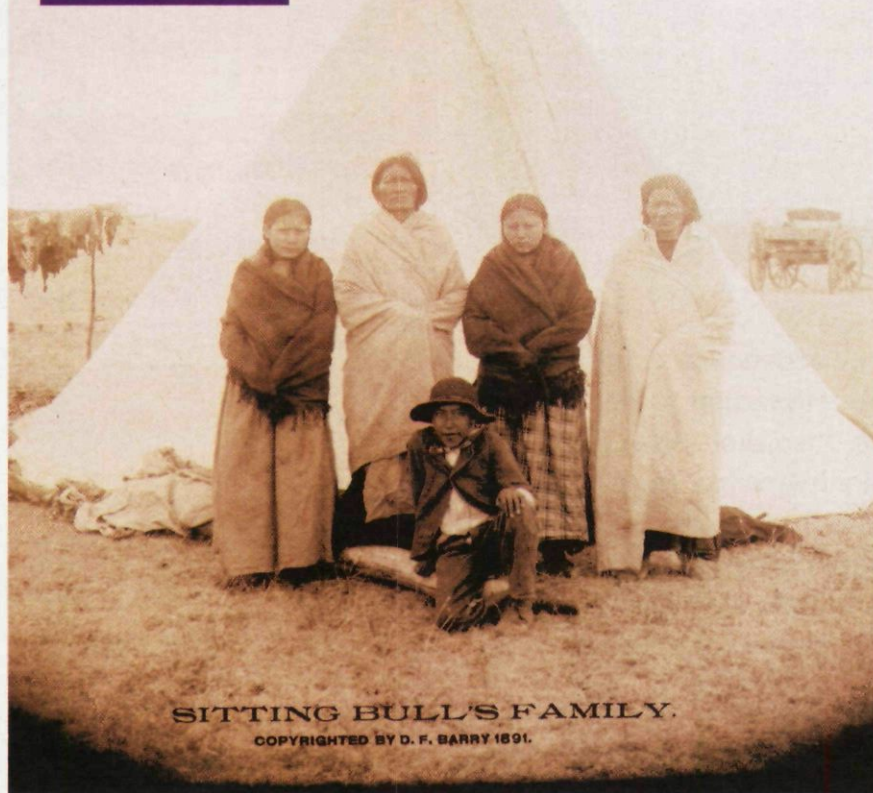
Lakota Military Leaders,

the entire class can read this part together

D.D. Mitchel, Commissioner of Indian Affairs

Major James Walsh, Royal Canadian Mounted Policeman

Sitting Bull's family in front of a tepee. Today, nearly half of all Lakota Sioux live on reservations in the Northern Great Plains. The rest live in cities across the United States.



SITTING BULL'S FAMILY.

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learns how to shoot his bow and arrow with expert aim, and to ride his horse with great **ease**.

Scene 2

Narrator 1: Soon after his 14th birthday, Slow joins a group of Lakota warriors on a mission into enemy Crow **territory**.

Narrator 2: On the third day, the Lakota warriors battle a group of Crow warriors. During the battle, Slow shows great strength and courage.

Narrator 1: When the Lakota

warriors return to the village the next day, a feast is held in honor of Slow's first victory. Slow's father speaks to him in front of a large crowd.

Father (proudly): My son. You have proven yourself a great warrior in battle.

Narrator 2: He places a white eagle feather in his son's hair.

Father: Wear this with pride. You are *Wichasha*, a man, today. You have earned a new name. From now on, you will be called Sitting Bull.

Sitting Bull: Thank you, Father.

Narrator 1: Later that night,

Sitting Bull dances his first victory dance.

Scene 3

Narrator 2: Several years later, Sitting Bull marries a beautiful young woman named Light Hair.

Narrator 1: Soon after their marriage, the couple goes on a hunting trip together.

Narrator 2: On the trip, Sitting Bull shoots and kills two big buffalo and one antelope.

Narrator 1: For several days, Sitting Bull and Light Hair cut up the meat to bring it back to the village. They use buffalo to make tepees, shields, drums, clothes, and food.

Narrator 2: Later that night, they work in their tepee, next to the fire.

Sitting Bull: During the hunt, I lost many good arrows. You must prepare the meat while I make more.

Light Hair: Yes, dear Sitting Bull.

Narrator 1: Sitting Bull and Light Hair are very happy together. But their happiness will soon come to an end.

Scene 4

Narrator 2: Sitting Bull sees many sad events in the years ahead.

Narrator 1: First, Light Hair dies while giving birth to their son.

Narrator 2: Then, several months later, his son dies from a sudden illness.

Narrator 1: Not long after this, 50 Crow warriors attack a group of Lakota, including Sitting Bull's father.

Narrator 2: During the battle, Sitting Bull's father sees a Crow fall off his horse. He chases after him, waving his **tomahawk** high in the air.

Father: Leave him to me!

Narrator 1: But the Crow takes out his knife and kills the older warrior.

Narrator 2: Later that night, Sitting Bull **mourns** the death of his father.

Scene 5

Narrator 1: At age 25, Sitting Bull becomes *Wichasha Wakan*, a holy or wise man.

Narrator 2: He begins to see powerful things in dreams and visions. These dreams allow him to **predict** the future.

Narrator 1: He also studies the

sacred Sun Dance under Dreamer-of-the-Sun, an older holy man.

When this holy man dies, Sitting Bull becomes the leader of the Sun Dance.

Narrator 2: Many years later, Sitting Bull dances the Sun Dance for so many hours that he has to be carried away to his tepee. It is there that he has a powerful vision of the future.

Sitting Bull (*talking to himself*): I have seen a great vision of what is to come. White men in blue coats will fall from the sky like rain! A great battle will be fought against the white men. And our people will win!

Scene 6

Narrator 1: For most of Sitting Bull's life, the tribes of the Great Plains struggle for control of their

territory with the *Wasichu*, or white men.

Narrator 2: As the white men move farther and farther into Lakota lands, more and more fighting takes place.

Narrator 1: To stop the fighting, the United States government holds a gathering of Great Plains chiefs at Fort Laramie in 1851.

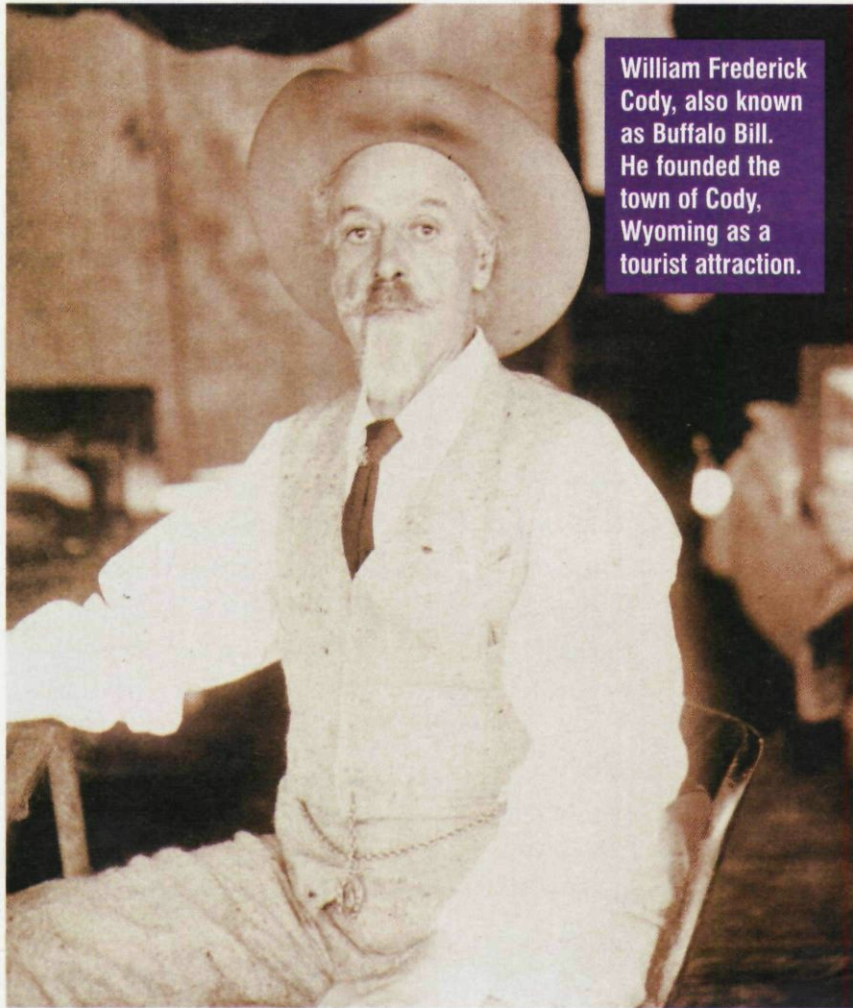
Narrator 2: The U.S. Commissioner of Indian Affairs, a man named D.D. Mitchel, speaks to a crowd of 10,000 Native Americans.

D.D. Mitchel: The nations gathered here today come together to make peace, with each other and with the United States. They also agree to recognize the right of the United States government to build roads and military posts in their territory. In **exchange** for this, the



WORD WORKOUT

ease: no difficulty | **ter•ri•to•ry:** land | **tom•a•hawk:** a light ax | **mourns:** feels sad about
pre•dict: know beforehand | **sa•cred:** holy | **ex•change:** return or trade | **tre•a•ty:** agreement



William Frederick Cody, also known as Buffalo Bill. He founded the town of Cody, Wyoming as a tourist attraction.

U.S. will pay them \$50,000 a year.

Narrator 1: But the **treaty** soon fails. Whites and Native Americans continue to fight in heavy battles.

Narrator 2: By the time Sitting Bull turns 38 and becomes a great leader of the *Hunkpapa*, a small group of the Lakota Sioux, he makes up his mind about the *Wasichu*.

Sitting Bull (to his people): I will fight against the white man until I have driven him from our land!

Scene 7

Narrator 1: In the winter of 1875, Sitting Bull gathers as many Sioux and Cheyenne warriors as he can to fight the *Wasichu*.

Sitting Bull (to his men): The battle will be long and hard. But you will win victory against the white man in the end!

Narrator 2: The following spring, under Sitting Bull's spiritual leadership, the warriors win two important victories against the United States **Cavalry**.

Narrator 1: Then, in the summer of 1876, Sitting Bull's vision finally comes true.

Narrator 2: Lt. George Custer leads his 7th Cavalry to a Sioux village near the Little Bighorn River.

Custer (to his men): Attack this village with all your might. Burn it to the ground!

Narrator 1: The Indian warriors wait until the moment is right to come charging down on Custer's men. With help from several other Lakota military leaders, they outnumber the U.S. forces three to one.

Lakota Military leaders (to the men): Charge!!!

Narrator 2: The warriors beat Custer's men. Just like Sitting Bull's vision, blue-coated white men fall like rain.

Scene 8

Narrator 1: After the Battle of Little Bighorn, Sitting Bull leads his people to Canada for protection from the white men.

Narrator 2: But when the Canadian Mounted Police learn of Custer's defeat, they surround the Sioux warriors. A man named Major Walsh takes Sitting Bull into **custody**.

Major Walsh: We know of your victory against the U.S. Cavalry at Little Bighorn. Our country is not to be used as a **refuge** from battles won or lost in the United States.

Narrator 1: The Canadians let Sitting Bull and the Sioux warriors stay. But they do not provide them with supplies.

Narrator 2: In the hard years ahead, Sitting Bull tries to have his people recognized as Canadians. But the Canadians will not help them.

Narrator 1: In the summer of 1881, in order to save his people, Sitting Bull surrenders at Fort Buford, North Dakota.

Narrator 2: For two years, he and his followers are held as prisoners

of war. And in 1883, Sitting Bull rejoins his tribe at the Standing Rock Reservation.

Scene 9

Narrator 1: In 1885, Sitting Bull is allowed to leave the reservation to perform in a show called Buffalo Bill's Wild West.

Narrator 2: He earns \$50 a week for riding around an arena. He signs autographs and sells photographs of himself for extra money.

Narrator 1: After one show, he even shakes hands with President Grover Cleveland.

Narrator 2: But Sitting Bull can't stand to be around the white people

and their customs. After four months in the show, he returns to the reservation.

Narrator 1: There Sitting Bull has another powerful vision.

Sitting Bull: I saw a beautiful yellow bird. It spoke to me and said: "Your own people, the Lakota, will kill you."

Narrator 2: In the winter of 1890, a group of Lakota policemen take Sitting Bull from his cabin.

Narrator 1: They are acting on rumors that he plans to lead another uprising on the reservation.

Narrator 2: When his followers come to his protection, there is a gunfight. Sitting Bull is killed.

Narrator 1: Sadly, Sitting Bull's vision comes true. ■

Epilogue

December 15, 2006 is the 116th anniversary of the death of Sitting Bull. His life stands out as a shining example of the Native American resistance to U.S. growth. Though Sitting Bull was one of the last Native American leaders to actively defend his people and their land from the United States, his struggle still continues in the courts today.

The death of Sitting Bull by a Sioux policeman.

In 1980, the Supreme Court ordered the U.S. government to pay \$105 million to eight Sioux tribes for land in South Dakota that had been taken illegally in 1877.

WORD WORKOUT

Cav•al•ry: troops on horseback | **cus•to•dy:** police control | **ref•uge:** safe place

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